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Local Resident wins award message from Erin Colfax

For Immediate Release

Local Resident and Research Science Educator, Erin Colfax, Joins Climate Change Research Team through Earthwatch Institute

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Erin Colfax, a resident of Riverdale NJ and research science teacher at the Science Academy at Morristown High School in Morristown, NJ, has won a Live from the Field Educator Fellowship from The Earthwatch Institute. Colfax will be joining a team of scientists and educators from around the globe to participate in a two week expedition to study "Climate Change at the Arctic's Edge" in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada. The expedition will be sponsored by HBSC and the Jarka Family.

From September 21 to October 1 Colfax will be transmitting her research live from the field back into the classrooms of Morristown High School through satellite and will be communicating with her students and the greater school community through a blog sponsored by The Earthwatch Institute. The research team will be led by principle investigator, Dr. Peter Kershaw from the University of Alberta. The primary goal of the research is to quantify the impacts of climate change on northern ecosystems. This project will entail gaining an understanding of the current processes and relationships driving these ecosystems by conducting systemic vegetation and soil surveys, recording microclimate measurements by using ground penetrating radar, and analyzing small mammalian communities. It is necessary to have detailed and accurate knowledge on the current state of these ecosystems in order to assess the impact of future climate change on treeline environments.

Colfax is not new to conducting research. She has a passion for writing her own original research studies and then going out in the field to gather data, make observations, and then communicate these observations with others. Over the past eight years she has traveled around the world conducting scientific research on all seven continents in hopes to bring science from all seven continents back to her students and the greater school community. Now being accepted as a member of the Earthwatch team "Climate Change at the Arctic's Edge," she seeks to understand what truly is happening to the Earth's climate. What are the noticeable affects that have been charted for the last three decades that have composed her lifetime? And Can the actions of the "little guy" actually have an effect on the climate or is the climate something that is bound to "evolve" as the Earth ages and changes?

Upon her return, Colfax plans on presenting and sharing her finds with her students and the greater school community by lecturing at several local libraries in the area. Colfax is the second person from Morristown High School to attend an Earthwatch program this year. Early in the summer, Catherine Chu, former student of Colfax's, participated in an Earthwatch program in Puerto Rico.

The Earthwatch Institute is a world leader in the field of experiential education providing opportunities in the field and online for volunteers to broaden their understanding of sustainability and support conservation research. There is no experience necessary to be involved and hundreds of teams worldwide that need support. Visit www.earthwatch.org or call 800-776-0188 for more information or to find out more about Colfax's expedition.

